John Astin

John Allen Astin (born March 30, 1930) is an American actor and director who has appeared in numerous stage, television and film roles, primarily in character roles. He is best known for starring in *The Addams Family* (1964–1966), as patriarch Gomez Addams, reprising the role in the television film *Halloween with the New Addams Family* (1977) and the animated series *The Addams Family* (1992–1993).

Astin starred in the TV film *Evil Roy Slade* (1972). Other notable film roles include *West Side Story* (1961), *That Touch of Mink* (1962), *Move Over, Darling* (1963), *Freaky Friday* (1976), *National Lampoon's European Vacation* (1985), *Teen Wolf Too* (1987) and *The Frighteners* (1996). Astin was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film for his directorial debut, the comedic short *Prelude* (1968).[1]

Astin has been married three times. His second wife was actress Patty Duke, and Astin is the adoptive father of Duke's son, actor Sean Astin.

Early years

Astin was born in Baltimore, Maryland, to Margaret Linnie (née Mackenzie) and Dr. Allen Varley Astin, who was the director of the National Bureau of Standards (now the National Institute of Standards and Technology). At that time, Astin and his family resided on Battery Lane in Bethesda, Maryland. He graduated from Johns Hopkins University in 1952, after transferring from Washington & Jefferson College. He studied mathematics at Washington & Jefferson and then drama at Johns Hopkins; he was a member of the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity at Johns Hopkins.[2][3][4]

Career

Astin started his performing career in theater, making his first Broadway appearance as an understudy in *Major Barbara* (1954) and also did voice-over work for commercials. He appeared as "Ready-Money Matt" in the long-running off-Broadway production of *Threepenny*

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Astin in a 1977 publicity photo for *Operation Petticoat*

Born	John Allen Astin March 30, 1930 Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.
Alma mater	Washington & Jefferson College Johns Hopkins University
Occupations	Actor · director
Years active	1954–2021
Television	*The Addams Family*
Spouses	Suzanne Hahn (m. 1956; div. 1972) Patty Duke (m. 1972; div. 1985) Valerie Sandobal (m. 1989)
Children	5, including Sean and Mackenzie
Parents	Allen V. Astin (father) Margaret Astin (mother)
Relatives	Alexander Astin (brother)
Signature	

Opera (which began in 1954), starring Lotte Lenya.[5] His first big film break came with a small role in *West Side Story* (1961).

During this period, his talent for also playing comedy was spotted by actor Tony Randall,[6] leading to guest starring roles on the sitcom *Dennis the Menace*, starring Jay North; *The Donna Reed Show*; and *Harrigan and Son*, starring Pat O'Brien, the first show broadcast on CBS and the latter two shows broadcast on ABC. In 1961, Astin appeared in the final episode of the ABC police drama *The Asphalt Jungle*.

During the 1962–63 television season, Astin had his first lead in a television series, the ABC sitcom *I'm Dickens, He's Fenster*, co-starring with Marty Ingels. Astin played Harry Dickens to Ingels's Arch Fenster, as two trouble-prone carpenters. The series combined witty dialogue with moments of slapstick comedy. *I'm Dickens, He's Fenster* received critical raves, but was against two high-rated shows, *Sing Along with Mitch* on NBC and *Route 66* on CBS. By the time *I'm Dickens, He's Fenster* gained a following and started winning its time slot, ABC had already canceled the show. A total of 32 episodes were produced.

Astin is perhaps best known for *The Addams Family*, a popular sitcom that ran on ABC from 1964 to 1966, based on cartoons created by Charles Addams. Astin starred as Gomez Addams, the head of the macabre family. He later reprised the role of Gomez in the 1977 made-for-television film *Halloween with the New Addams Family* and voiced the role of Gomez in the animated series *The Addams Family* from 1992 to 1993. In the Canadian-American television series *The New Addams Family*, which ran from 1998 to 1999, Astin appeared as Grandpapa Addams, with the role of Gomez played by Glenn Taranto. With the death of Lisa Loring, who played Wednesday, in January 2023, Astin is the last surviving cast member of *The Addams Family*.

Astin alongside Carolyn Jones as Gomez and Morticia Addams in *The Addams Family* in 1964

Astin joined the retooled *The Pruitts of Southampton* (re-titled *The Phyllis Diller Show*) for the second half of the 1966–67 season, playing Diller's brother-in-law, Angus Pruitt. He also played the Riddler in the second season of *Batman* (Frank Gorshin returned for the third and final season.)[7]

He played submarine commander Matthew Sherman on the 1970s television series *Operation Petticoat*. He also made several appearances in the first two seasons of the popular mystery series *Murder, She Wrote*, as scheming real estate developer (and finally Sheriff) Harry Pierce, who ends up as the murderer in his last episode. He had a recurring role on the sitcom *Night Court* as Buddy, eccentric former mental patient and the father of lead character Harry Stone, who often ended his conversations with a big smile and the phrase,"...but I'm feeling MUCH better now!"

Astin played the regular role of Ed LaSalle on the short-lived Mary Tyler Moore sitcom *Mary* during the 1985–86 television season. He also guest starred on numerous television series, including appearances on *Duckman*, *Homeboys in Outer Space*, Jack Palance's ABC circus drama *The Greatest Show on Earth*, and a 1967 episode of *Gunsmoke* as Festus Haggen's cousin Henry.

Astin received an Academy Award nomination for *Prelude*, a short film that he wrote, produced, and directed. He was nominated for an Ace Award for his work on *Tales from the Crypt*, and received an Emmy Award nomination for the cartoon voice of Gomez on ABC-TV's *The Addams Family*. He also

voiced the character Bull Gator on the animated series *Taz-Mania*. Astin served for four years on the board of directors of the Writers Guild of America, and has been active in community affairs in Los Angeles and Santa Monica.

Astin has continued to work in acting, appearing in a string of *Killer Tomatoes* films as Professor Gangreen and as Professor Wickwire in *The Adventures of Brisco County, Jr.*. In 1996 he featured as The Judge, the ghost of an Old West gunslinger, in Peter Jackson's *The Frighteners*. He also has toured the one-man play *Edgar Allan Poe: Once Upon a Midnight*, written by Paul Day Clemens and Ron Magid. In a December 2007 *Baltimore Examiner* interview, Astin said of his acting experience:

> We all struggle, and I had plenty of that, but I've had a great time. I've done hundreds of TV shows and 30 to 40 movies, and I love acting. I'm very happy having done the Poe. That's been really terrific.

Astin is a member of the board of directors of the Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts in Columbia, Maryland.[8][9]

Teaching

Until his retirement in 2021, Astin was director of the Theater Arts and Studies Department and Homewood Professor of the Arts at Johns Hopkins University, his alma mater, which offers an undergraduate minor program.[10] Commenting on his dual career, he said in 2007, "I don't know one major university that has a known actor teaching every day." Astin noted that he is one of only a handful to earn a drama degree from Hopkins. He taught at Hopkins from 2001 until 2021.[11] Devika Bhise has been working with the university to create "The Astin Fund", an endowed chair that would allow theater to be a major at Johns Hopkins University for undergraduates.

The handprints of John Astin in front of Hollywood Hills Amphitheater at Walt Disney World's Disney's Hollywood Studios theme park

Personal life

Astin has five sons; three (David, Allen, and Tom) with his first wife, Suzanne Hahn, and two with his second wife, actress Patty Duke – one adopted (Sean, Patty's son from an earlier relationship, whom Astin adopted during their marriage) and one biological (Mackenzie).

Astin married Valerie Ann Sandobal in 1989 and they live in Baltimore, Maryland. Astin is a vegetarian.[12] He practices Nichiren Buddhism as a member of the worldwide Buddhist association Soka Gakkai International.[13]

Filmography

Astin's film and television roles include:[14]

Film

Year	Title	Role	Notes	ref
1960	*The Pusher*	Detective		
1961	*West Side Story*	Glad Hand, Social Worker Leading Dance	American romantic musical drama film directed by Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins. The film is an adaptation of the 1957 Broadway musical of the same name, which in turn was inspired by William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*.	[15]
1962	*That Touch of Mink*	Mr. Everett Beasley		
1963	*Move Over, Darling*	Clyde Prokey	The picture was a remake of a screwball comedy film, *My Favorite Wife* (1940), with Irene Dunne, Cary Grant and Gail Patrick. In between these movies, a version entitled *Something's Got to Give* began shooting in 1962, directed by George Cukor and starring Marilyn Monroe and Dean Martin, but was never finished.	[16]
	The Wheeler Dealers	SEC official	Released as **Separate Beds** in the UK	[17]
1967	*The Spirit Is Willing*	Dr. Frieden		
1968	*Candy*	Daddy / Uncle Jack	Sex farce film directed by Christian Marquand based on the 1958 novel by Terry Southern and Mason Hoffenberg, from a screenplay by Buck Henry. The film satirizes pornographic stories through the adventures of its naive heroine, Candy, played by Ewa Aulin.	[18][19][20]
1969	*Viva Max!*	Sergeant Valdez	Comedy film	
1971	*Bunny O'Hare*	Ad	American comedy film directed by Gerd Oswald. Bette Davis was unhappy with the final film and sued AIP for $3.3 million in damages.	[21][22]
1972	*Un secuestro de locura*	Star	Spanish-language film. Directed by Cy Howard.	
	Evil Roy Slade	Evil Roy Slade		
	Get to Know Your Rabbit	Mr. Turnbull		
	Every Little Crook and Nanny	Vito Garbugli		
	Wacky Taxi	Pepper		
1973	*The Brothers O'Toole*	Michael O'Toole / Desperate Ambrose Littleberry	American comedy western film directed by Richard Erdman. Michael O'Toole, a roguish gambler and con artist, and younger brother Timothy O'Toole, a	

			womanizer, turn the sleepy mining town of Molybdenum, Colorado upside down.	
1976	*Freaky Friday*	Bill Andrews	American fantasy comedy film directed by Gary Nelson.	
1985	*National Lampoon's European Vacation*	Kent Winkdale (host of "Pig in a Poke")	Originally given the working title **Vacation '2' Europe**. The second film in National Lampoon's *Vacation* film series.	
1987	*Teen Wolf Too*	Dean Dunn	American comedy film The sequel to *Teen Wolf*.	
	Body Slam	Scotty the car dealer	American comedy film directed by Hal Needham.	
1988	*Return of the Killer Tomatoes*	Professor Mortimer Gangreen	A horror comedy film The second film in the *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* film series.	
1989	*Night Life*	Uncle Verlin	A horror comedy film	
1990	*Gremlins 2: The New Batch*	Janitor		[23]
	Killer Tomatoes Strike Back	Professor Mortimer Gangreen	The third film in the *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* film series.	
1991	*Killer Tomatoes Eat France*	Professor Mortimer Gangreen	The fourth film in the *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* film series.	
1993	*Stepmonster*	Minister	Direct-to-video film	
1994	*The Silence of the Hams*	The Ranger	Italian: **Il Silenzio dei Prosciutti** Parody film of many popular thriller and horror films, notably *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Psycho*.	[24][25][26]
	Huck and the King of Hearts	Zach		
1996	*The Frighteners*	The Judge	New Zealand-American horror comedy fantasy film directed by Peter Jackson and co-written with his wife, Fran Walsh.	[27]
2001	*Betaville*	President Sender		
2006	*What the Bleep!?: Down the Rabbit Hole*	Dr. Quantum	Voice	
2015	*Starship II: Rendezvous with Ramses*	Professor Peabody		

Television

Year	Title	Role	Notes	ref
1960	*Maverick*	Joe Lambert	Episode: "The Town That Wasn't There" (S 4:Ep 3)	
1961	*The Twilight*	Charlie	Episode: "A Hundred Yards Over the Rim" (S 2:Ep	

	Zone		23)	
1962	*77 Sunset Strip* (1958-1964 TV series)	Martin Grosch	Episode: "Dress Rehearsal" (S4:Ep36) air: 05/25/1962	
1962	*Ben Casey*	Nat Morris	Episode: "Preferably, the Less-Used Arm" (S 1:Ep 29)	
1962–1963	*I'm Dickens, He's Fenster*	Harry Dickens	Main role	
1964–1966	*The Addams Family*	Gomez Addams	Main role	
1967	*The Pruitts of Southampton*	Rudy Pruitt	Main role The show was based on the novel *House Party* (1954) by Patrick Dennis.	[28]
	Batman	The Riddler	Episodes: "Batman's Anniversary" "A Riddling Controversy"	
	The Wild Wild West	Count Nikolai Sazanov	Episode: "The Night of the Tartar"	
	The Flying Nun	Father Lundigan	Episode: "Flight of the Dodo Bird"	
	Gunsmoke	Henry Haggen	Episode: "Hard Luck Henry" (S 13:Ep 7)	
1968	*Death Valley Days*	Jesse Martin	Episode: "The Gold Mine on Main Street" (S 16: Ep 20)	
1969	*Bonanza*	Abner Willoughby	Episode: "Abner Willoughby's return" (S 11:Ep 13)	
1971	*The Odd Couple*	Beau Buffingham	Episode: "Oscar's New Life" (S 1:Ep 21)	
1971–1972	*Night Gallery*	Jonathan, Randy Miller, Munsch	Episodes: "Pamela's Voice" (S 1:Ep 13) "Hell's Bells" (S 2:Ep 29) "The Girl with the Hungry Eyes" (S 3:Ep 2)	
1972–1978	*Insight*	Guest star	4 episodes "Death of an Elephant" (S 12:Ep 23) "Truck Stop" (S 13: Ep 23) "The One-Armed Man" (S 15: Ep 20) "Second Chorus" (S 18: Ep 31)	
1972	*The New Scooby-Doo Movies*	Gomez Addams	Voice, episode: "Wednesday Is Missing" (S 1:Ep 3)	
1972–1973	*McMillan & Wife*	Sykes	Episodes: "The Night of the Wizard" (S 2:Ep 1) "Cop of the Year" (S 2:Ep 3) "Two Dollars on Trouble to Win" (S 2:Ep 7)	
1973	*The Partridge Family*	Sydney Rose	Episode: "The Mad Millionaire"	

	Circle of Fear	Fred Colby	Episode: "The Graveyard Shift"	
1974	*Only with Married Men*	Dr. Harvey Osterman	Television film	
1975	*The Dream Makers*	Manny Wheeler	Television film	
1975–1979	*Welcome Back, Kotter*	Museum curator	Recurring role	
1976	*Police Story*	Dr. Milford	Episode: "Firebird" (S 3:Ep 18)	
1977	*Halloween with the New Addams Family*	Gomez Addams	Television film	
1977–1978	*Operation Petticoat*	Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Sherman	Main role	[29][30][31]
1977–1980	*Captain Caveman and the Teen Angels*	Additional Voices	Recurring role	
1978	*The Love Boat*	Dave, The Hermit	Episode: "Marooned" (S 2:Ep 1)	
	Fantasy Island	Charles D. Preston	Episode: "The Beachcomber / The Last Whodunit" (S 2:Ep 3)	
1984	*The Facts of Life*	Vito Miles	Episode: "The Summer of '84" (S 6:Ep 1)	
	Diff'rent Strokes	C.W.	Episode: "A Haunting We Will Go" (S 7:Ep 1)	
	Simon & Simon	Uncle Ray Simon	Episode: "Revolution #9 1/2" (S 4:Ep 12)	
1984–1990	*Night Court*	Buddy Ryan, Kenny	Recurring role	
1984	*Murder, She Wrote*	Ross Hayley, Harry Pierce, Fritz Randall	Episodes: "Hooray for Homicide" (S 1:Ep 4) "Joshua Peabody Died Here... Possibly" (S 2:Ep 2) "A Lady in the Lake" (S 2:Ep 7) "Sticks and Stones" (S 2:Ep 10) "Film Flam" (S 11:Ep 6)	
1985–1986	*Mary*	Ed LaSalle	Main role	
1985	*Riptide*	Baxter Bernard	Episode: "Baxter and Boz" (S 2:Ep 13)	
	Otherworld	Akin	Episode: "Mansion of the Beast" (S 1:Ep 7)	
1986	*Mr. Boogedy*	Neil Witherspoon	Television film	[32]
1987	*St. Elsewhere*	Kevin	Episode: "Visiting Daze" (S 5:Ep 14)	
	The Charmings	Jack/The Devil	Episode: "The Witch is of Van Oaks" (S 2:Ep 3)	
1987–1988	*Webster*	Uncle Charles	Episodes:	

			"Simple Gifts" (S 5:Ep 12) "Rich Man, Poor Man" (S 6:Ep 13)	
1988	*Charles in Charge*	Uncle Joe	Episode: "Pickle King of New York" (S 3:Ep 14)	
1989	*The Saint: The Blue Dulac*	George Lafosse	Television filme	
1990	*Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*	Dr. Putrid T. Gangreen	Voice, main role	
1991	*Eerie Indiana*	Radford	Recurring role	
	Taz-Mania	Bull Gator	Voice, recurring role	
	Father Dowling Mysteries	Manager of Gun Club	Episode: "The Priest Killer Mystery" (S 3:Ep 16)	
	They Came from Outer Space	Neville Nessen	Episode: "Sex, Lies and UFOs, part 2" (S 1:Ep 20)	
	Tales from the Crypt	Nelson Halliwell	Episode: "Top Billing" (S 3:Ep 5)	
1992–1993	*The Addams Family*	Gomez Addams	Voice, main role Animated series based on the eponymous comic strip characters. The series' development began in the wake of the successful 1991 *Addams Family* feature film. It was the second-to-last Hanna-Barbera-produced show to premiere on ABC.	
1993	*The Adventures of Brisco County, Jr.*	Professor Wickwire	7 episodes	
1993-1994	*Problem Child*	General Pierre Habib-Johnson	Voice, recurring role	
1994–1997	*Duckman*	Terry Duke Tetzloff	Voice, recurring role	
1994	*Bonkers*	The Mole	Episode: "Stressed to Kill" (S 3:Ep23)	
	Burke's Law	Alexander	Episode: "Who Killed Alexander the Great?" (S 1:Ep 6)	
	Mad About You	Himself	Episode: "Up All Night" (S 2:Ep 23)	
	Step by Step	George Humphries	Episode: "The Ice Cream Man Cometh" (S 4:Ep 9)	
	Aaahh!!! Real Monsters	Doctor	Voice, episode: "Monstrous Make-Over / A Wing and a Scare" (S 1:Ep 4)	
1994–1995	*Step by Step*	George Humphries	Episodes: "The Ice Cream Man Cometh" (S 4:Ep 9) "The Flight Before Christmas"(S 5:Ep 11)	
	Aladdin	Sydney	Voice, episodes:	

			"The Animal Kingdom" (S 2:Ep 31) "While the City Snoozes" (S 3:Ep 4)	
1995	*The Twisted Tales of Felix the Cat*	Additional Voices	Recurring role	
1996	*The Nanny*	Dr. Roberts	Episodes: "Your Feets Too Big" (S 3:Ep 20) "Tattoo" (S 4:Ep 9)	
	Quack Pack	Mr. Roborson	Voice, episode: "The Unusual Suspects"(S 1:Ep 15)	
1997	*Homeboys in Outer Space*	Rhymer	Episode: "The Adventures of Ratman and Gerbil or, Holy Homeboys in Outer Space" (S 1:Ep 21)	
	Johnny Bravo	Scientist 1/Blind Man	Voice, episode: "Jumbo Johnny / The Perfect Gift / Bravo, James Bravo" (S 1:Ep 10)	
	Pinky and the Brain	Grover Whalen	Voice, episode: "Mice Don't Dance" (S 3:Ep 11)	
1998–1999	*The New Addams Family*	Grampapa Addams	Episodes: "Grandpapa Addams Comes to Visit" (S 1:Ep 16) "Fester and Granny vs. Grandpapa Addams"	
1998–1999	*Recess*	Supt. Skinner, The Judge	Voice, episodes: "Kids in the Mist" (S 1:Ep 12) "The Story of Whomps" (S 2:Ep 11) "The Spy Who Came in from the Playground" (S 4:Ep4) "Prickly is Leaving" (S 4:Ep 11)	
1999	*The Hughleys*	Guest star	Episode: "Storm o' the Century" (S 1:Ep 17)	
	The Wild Thornberrys	Bangaboo	Voice, episode: "The Great Bangaboo" (S 1:Ep 17)	
2000	*The Strip*	Orson Bates	Episode: "I Wear My Sunglasses At Night" (S 1:Ep 9)	
	Becker	Richard Wilson	Episode: "All the Rage" (S 2:Ep 15)	
2001	*As Told By Ginger*	Dave Bishop	Voice, episodes: "Blizzard Conditions" (S 1:Ep 14) "Piece of My Heart" (S 2:Ep 3)	
2004–2007	*Higglytown Heroes*	Santa Claus	Voice, episodes: "Twinkle's Wish" (S 1:Ep 12) "'Tis the Season to Be Ducky" (S 3:Ep 18)	
2005	*School of Life*	Stormin' Norman Warner	Television film	
2006	*My First Time*	Himself	Episode: "Something About Mary" (S 1:Ep 1)	

2017	*Justice League Action*	Uncle Dudley	Voice, episode: "Captain Bamboozle" (S 1:Ep 49)	

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External links

- John Astin (https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0040014/) at IMDb
- John Astin (https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/101754) at the Internet Broadway Database
- John Astin (http://www.iobdb.com/CreditableEntity/5917) at the Internet Off-Broadway Database
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- Article about John Astin's teaching work (http://www.jhu.edu/~gazette/2006/24apr06/24course.html) from the *Johns Hopkins Gazette*, "Course Catalog: Contemporary Theatre and Film: An Insider's View"; April 24, 2006 (Vol. 35 No. 31) (Includes contemporary picture of Astin)

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